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England and on the Continent was anciently appropriated as a place of human habitation.

The following donations were presented :—

The Marquis of Kildare presented a MS. copy of the "Book of Postings of the Forfeited Estates in Ireland, A. D. 1701."

Dr. W. D. Moore presented his Translation of Professor Donders' work "On the Constituents of Food."

The thanks of the Academy were returned to the donors.

The Academy adjourned.

MONDAY, JUNE 11, 1866.

Sir W. R. W. WILDE, M. D., Vice-President, in the Chair.

THE following gentlemen were elected members of the Academy :— John A. Baker, Esq.; Edward H. Bennett, M. D.; Francis R. Cruise, M. D.; Thomas Galwey, Esq.; Thomas Maxwell Hutton, Esq.; Rev. John O'Rourke; and Alexander Thom, Esq.

Dr. Thomas Hayden read a paper "On the Physiology of Protrusion of the Tongue, and its Deviation to the Affected Side in Unilateral Paralysis."

Mr. EUGENE A. CONWELL read the following paper :—

#### HAS THE LIA FAIL ON TARA HILL BEEN INSCRIBED ?

So much has already been written about the obelisk on Tara Hill, but more particularly by the late lamented Dr. Petrie, to prove that it is the veritable Lia Fail, or Stone of Destiny, on which the Irish kings were formerly crowned, that it is with a certain amount of well-felt diffidence I venture to draw attention to this stone in a new light, and to head this communication with the foregoing question.

It is well known that its present position in the great oval enclosure of the *Rath na Riogh*, or the King's Chair, is not its original one. During the current century it was removed from an adjoining tumulus, called *Dumha-na-Ngiall*, or the Mound of the Hostages, where it previously lay, and was erected as a headstone to the grave of thirty-seven insurgents who were killed in a skirmish with the military at the battle of Tara in 1798.

On the 18th of last month (May, 1866) I paid a visit to Tara, and made an examination of this stone. It stands five feet over ground; and from subsequent examination, on Saturday last, I found that it was sunk a foot and a half in the earth, the entire height or length of the stone being  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet, and its girth 4 feet 10 inches.\* I was at first struck by finding two

\* The late eminent Dr. Petrie, in his celebrated essay "On the History and Antiquities of Tara Hall," published in the "Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy,"

lines cut into the south-east face of the stone, which overlooks "The Croppies' Grave" (as it is familiarly called), each line being  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch long, about an inch asunder, and cut or furrowed out, in V-shaped fashion, to the depth of about three-eighths of an inch. On the top of the pillar, which is rounded off, can still be traced the remains of four cup-like hollows, in their present appearance rudely dug into the stone. Other portions of the pillar also afford evidences of similar cup-like hollows.

The stone itself, which is a pillar of very fine-grained granite—a rock not belonging to the locality, and which consequently must have been imported here—appears to me not to have been originally a round pillar, as its present aspect might suggest, but a quadrilateral stone, whose edges have been worn off by attrition and the action of the weather.

On Saturday last (June 9, 1866), I paid another visit to Tara; and having dug round the base to the extremity of this stone, I found that on the same face which contained the two inscribed lines before mentioned, for a foot in height, the surface was quite smooth and flat across the entire face of the stone; and on this portion of it were two lines cut, as seen in the rubbing, and a third line ending in a cup hollow. The fact of this portion of the stone, now sunk in the earth, having been found to be quite smooth, leads me to suppose that the entire surface of the stone was originally the same, and contained characters engraved upon it. On the opposite side of the stone, now its north-west face, and near the bottom, are to be found three other lines, whether or not owing to the action of time, assisted by a natural fracture in the rock, is a point which I trust some one more competent may hereafter clear up.

From the fact of the principal cuttings which I have observed on this stone overlooking immediately "The Croppies' Grave," where it has in recent times found a site, I infer that those who placed it there must have observed, and acted on such evidence, that this face of the stone contained something more of interest than any of the others.

The stone itself, although it may have been originally covered with hieroglyphics, from being of rather a soft and friable nature has in course of time lost those inscribed records, which might have settled the question of its identification as the real *Lia Fail*.

vol. xviii., p. 161 (1837), writing of the *Lia Fail*, has fallen into two mistakes regarding this stone—one, as to its material being limestone; and the other, as to its dimensions, which are overstated. His description is:—

"The material of which this monument is composed is a granular limestone, very probably from some primary district; but whether it be Irish or foreign has not been ascertained; it may be remarked, however, that no granular limestone occurs in the vicinity. The stone is at present but six feet above ground, but its real height is said to be twelve feet."